



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Josh Sacks and his parents Shawn and Sandra on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos.

### ZY Gemach

The kehilla is reminded that ZY Gemach is available for loans and can lend up to £2,000 with the following terms:

- \* first repayment due 90 days after the loan is received
- \* repaid in monthly instalments over a period of up to 2 years
- \* one Guarantor required

### Grinding the Point

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

The sojourn in the desert was no walk in the park. True, it was a period of time in which miracles were the norm and the level of spirituality soared, but life next to G-d required a perfect commitment. The actions of the Jewish nation were scrutinized, the eyes of Hashem peering as a strict teacher, correcting and adjusting every wrong move with immediate censure and swift action. We suffered for our mistakes. The Jews wandered for 40 years because of the erroneous reports of the spies. And the many rebellions and uprisings concerning the manna and other matters, including the ever-resounding desire to return to Egypt, were met with swift, decisive retribution.

This week, however, the rebels are rebuked in three totally different ways, each a miracle unto itself. Korach organized a rebellion against Moshe and Ahron. Claiming nepotistic inconsistency, Korach said that Ahron did not deserve the position of Kohen Gadol. After all, he claimed "the entire congregation is holy, (they were all at Sinai). "Why, then," he argued with Moshe, "do you raise yourselves higher than the rest of the congregation of the Lord?" (Numbers 16:3)

But this time the punishment is not the ordinary plague. First, in a display of absolute power and sovereignty, Hashem opens the earth and swallows Korach and the immediate family of rabble-rousers whole and alive!

Then his 250 co-conspirators are consumed by fire as they attempt to offer a ktorez (incense) sacrifice. And afterwards, to quell more grumbling, another miracle occurs. Each tribal leader is commanded to place a stick in the ground and miraculously only Ahron's stick begins to bud before their eyes. It grew leaves, flowers, and almonds — a heavenly sign that only Ahron merits the exalted position of Kohen Gadol.

It always bothered me. The opening of the earth is no little feat. Earthquakes of that magnitude did not occur at a moment's notice! Wasn't that event powerful enough to make the point? Why was there a need to quell the whining and punish the perpetrators with such powerful punishments and magnificent miracles? Shouldn't a heavenly warning have been enough?

Rabbi Meshulam Igra of Pressburg was one of Europe's leading scholars in the latter part of the 18th century. As a young man, he was engaged to the daughter of a prominent community leader in the city of Butzatz. A few months before the wedding the young chosson ate a meal at the home of his future father-in-law. Dessert was served together with a hot treat a delicacy that the impoverished Reb Meshulam had never heard of — coffee.

The servant brought out a cup of brewed coffee together with sugar and milk. The prospective father-in-law directed his son in law to partake. The young scholar looked quizzically at each of the entities and began to ponder. There were two liquids and sugar. The Talmud teaches that eating precedes drinking. He took a spoon of sugar and ate it. Then he was unsure what to drink first the milk or the black brew. Noting that darkness in the Torah comes before day, he drank the black coffee. Noticing the grinds at the bottom of the cup, he took his spoon and began to eat them. Not wanting to embarrass his soon-to-be father-in-law who had served such a difficult-to-eat dessert, he slowly chewed

## "את מקדשי תיראו"

שליט"א The Rov

The **טור** towards the end of **סימן צ** brings the **תלמוד ירושלמי** which states that a person should always enter the **בית הכנסת** through two doorways. This is based on the **לשקוד על דל ביתי יום יום - פסוק (משלי ל"ד ח)**. The **בית חדש** explains the symbolism of this **הלכה** to remind us of the special status of **עם ישראל**. In contrast to a king of flesh and blood, where, if one wants to present a plea to the king one is stopped in the outer courtyard to speak initially to the king's officers, who will then present one's request to the king (compare both **המון** and **אסתר** in the **מגילה**). Whereas we have the ability to go into the throne room of the "King of Kings" to speak directly to the **הקב"ה**.

The structure and procedure in the **בית המקדש** clearly demonstrates this idea. In order for the **כהן** to enter the **היכל** he had first to pass through the **אולם** (porch) and then turn into the **"היכל"**. Similarly the **כהן גדול** on **כפור** to enter the **קודש קדשים** had to pass through the **היכל** first on his way to seek direct forgiveness from the **הקב"ה** in the Holy of Holies.

Because of this **הלכה** the **משנה ברורה** (in **סי"א ס"א**) indicates that there should be a courtyard or **עזרה** at the entry to Shul, but one should **not** stop in the hallway to Daven.

and swallowed the grinds. His prospective bride stood in shock.

"Father," she cried "I cannot marry a man who does not know how to drink a cup of coffee. He is a total klutz!" The engagement was broken.

Years later this same community leader visited the home of Rav Yeshaya Pick the prominent Rav of Breslow. Upon entering the study he noticed the rav engrossed in a letter. He looked totally concerned and distraught. When the man asked what problem was, Rabbi Pick told him that he just received a letter that is filled with the deepest insights. "I have to be totally immersed in Torah thought to begin to comprehend the level of this man's brilliance. In fact," he continued, "I do not think a man of this caliber has emerged in the last fifty years! And," he added, "besides the brilliance, one can note his amazing humility and fine character throughout every word he writes." Then he looked up at the man. "You come from Butzatz. Have you ever heard of a man called Meshulam Igra?"

The man didn't emit a verbal response. He fainted.

When he came to, he recounted the entire story of the engagement and its dissolution, how Rabbi Igra was meant to be his son-in-law but the match was broken over coffee grounds. Rabbi Pick looked up at him and shook his head sadly. "Is that so?" he exclaimed. "You gave up the opportunity for this great man because he did not know how to drink a cup of coffee?"

## Davening Times

### פרשת קרח

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.56pm-8.00pm
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.57am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.55pm
Motzei Shabbos	11.00pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tue / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.50pm

Then he looked at the man and simply declared, "Faint again!" Perhaps the greatest undoing of our nation throughout its history is the non-appreciation of its great leaders. Among our midst exists diamonds, but they are often treated like raw coal. There is a most popular song, sung in the Yeshiva world on all holidays, "Moshe emes v'Torasos emes. Moshe is true and his Torah is true." The inseparability of the Torah and its teachers, the appreciation of the two as inseparable in their validity is a fundamental in throughout the writings of Maimonides and all the philosophies of Torah Judaism. Without recognizing the greatness of our leaders, we would be lost. Hashem did not the rebellion against Moshe to subside with just one action. It took three very different miracles, the splitting of the earth, the fire that consumed, and the budding of the dry sticks, to reiterate the most important point that sustains us until today. Because if we do not realize from where our strength comes, Hashem will remind us. And He will tell us to faint again!

**For the Love of G-d** **Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)**  
 Korach the son of Izhar, the son of Kohas, the son of Levi took... (Bamidbar 13:2)

RECENTLY A RELATIVE told me about a story I had heard before, though I could not recall where. It was about a man in the camps who had been taken out by Nazis to be hanged. He was asked if there was anything he wanted before he was killed, and he asked for his tefillin, which he was given. As he wore his tefillin he noticed the Jews who had been gathered to watch the killing were crying. He told them, "Don't be sad. I am happy to be doing this," as he sanctified the Name of G-d one last time. When the German soldier saw that the Jew was enjoying himself, he brought him down off the platform and instead gave him a bunch of rocks to hold. He told him, "If you drop any of these rocks, I will shoot you," and then proceeded to beat the Jew 29 times. Somehow, miraculously, the Jew did not drop a single rock and, even more miraculously, survived the war. As I listened to the story, a little voice inside me said, "Hashem! This man was risking his last moments of life to sanctify Your Name, and he even derived enjoyment from the sacrifice. He CLEARLY loved YOU, and this is how YOU responded? By having the enemy take his tefillin away and mercilessly beat him instead?"

True, it saved his life, but was there no other more "peaceful" way to do that? Couldn't there have been a fire, or an air raid...or something else to interrupt the Nazi brutality? There are many stories of that type. Why did this prisoner have to go through what he did? HIS love we saw; where was G-d's? The truth is, it did not start or end there. We can look back to Rebi Akiva, who suffered humiliation as he became a ba'al teshuvah at the age of 40, and gave the rest of his life to Torah. As the angels themselves questioned, Rebi Akiva should have passed from this world peacefully, not being tortured by the vicious Romans to his dying moment! Where was G-d's love THEN?

I, on the other, have worked differently. I think I have always loved G-d, but more so as I get older. And I love to do things to show that I love Him. But I have to admit, when they backfire, or they don't bring the kind of "positive" results I expected, I am disappointed, confused, even frustrated. To use the language of the Talmud, I sort of kick the succah on the way out. Love's a two-way street, right?

Wrong, at least not when it comes to G-d. True, the Mishnah does advocate unconditional love between people, but not to the point that you withstand abuse. When humans don't reciprocate love, it can be an indication of something wrong. You may not love someone else for ulterior reasons, but you certainly shouldn't turn a blind eye to an abusive partner, who certainly means you harm even if they can't help themselves.

When it comes to G-d, however, we say, "All that G-d does He does for the good." But what if it was for the bad? That's what it says: All that G-d does He does for the GOOD. It means that whatever seems like the worst thing possible to us, ultimately, and by definition, is for the good. That is why He is called "G-d," like the word "good," to remind us that G-d by His very nature, only does good.

This would not have been so hard to see had the first man not messed things up by eating from the Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Man was straightforward, and therefore G-d could be straightforward with him. Good was good and bad was bad, and never the twain met. When Adam sinned, however, and ate from the forbidden fruit, he changed EVERYTHING. He especially changed the way G-d worked with us because, kabbalistically, Adam caused good and evil to mix, causing good to be in evil, and vice versa. It made history and Hashgochah Pratis—Divine Providence—murky.

Accepting Torah at Mt. Sinai, 2,448 years later, was the opportunity to reverse the sin of Adam HaRishon and set things right once again. But that too was short-lived, when the Erev Rav, the "Mixed Multitude" whose very name

implies such a mixture of good and evil, built the golden calf. It undid just about all of the rectification of Kabbalas HaTorah, making history, and Divine Providence, murky once again.

Accepting on faith that G-d only does good is the way we survive the deceptions of history. It means a ONE-WAY love with G-d, from us to Him. He does not need to perform acts that WE can perceive as GOOD, and therefore, as acts of love. He loves us. He always has. He always will. He may hate evil, but He loves us, and that is the greatest "given" of life there is.

The variable in our relationship with G-d is not HIS love, but OUR love. How far are we prepared to go to love Him? How unconditional can we make our love of G-d? How strong is our love, that it won't bend under the pressure of what seems to man, to be Divine abandonment?

These are the only questions that should concern us. Had they been the questions that had concerned Korach, his rebellion would not have happened. He would have been happy with his portion, though his yetzer hara was not. He would not have felt slighted and would have been, as Moshe Rabbeinu told him to be, "happy with his portion.."

His idea of entitlement was born out of the belief that love of G-d was a two-way street. He assumed that he had risen to (or at least inherited) a level of greatness that G-d "appreciated," so he expected to get some of the appreciation back in terms of a higher position in life. Without that confirmation, Korach and, thanks to him, his assembly, felt "robbed," and they took their grievance to Moshe.

Moshe responded that it had nothing to do with entitlement as much as it had to do what was right for the situation, as G-d saw it. If he was overlooked, it was G-d Who overlooked him, because there was a better way to go for the sake of the Jewish people and Jewish history. What he was given already, Moshe told him, was from G-d. Demanding more was at the cost of things greater than himself, and even the 250 of the Sanhedrin.

Loving G-d does not entitle us to anything, at least in this world. It will entitle us to EVERYTHING in the NEXT WORLD. In this world, it is a tremendous merit to be able to love G-d, and to find ways to express that love. Fortunate and blessed is the one who truly feels love of G-d in their heart. Happy will be the one who can do that without looking for signs of G-d's love in return.

Make no mistake about it. If you truly love G-d then G-d will truly love you. The truth is this, G-d loves you regardless. And make no mistake about it, He loves to show you His love in this world too, when the situation allows. But one mistake you should NEVER make is to think that if YOUR love of G-d does not result in what you think should be an act of HIS love, that it means HIS love isn't there.

It IS there, more than we can ever know, for now at least. Later, when history comes to a close and the yetzer hara is no more, and all evil is gone from the world, we'll see the truth. And we'll be overwhelmed by just how much G-d has ALWAYS loved us. ALWAYS.

**Q&A**

**Kids**

1. Who did Korach separate himself with at the beginning of the Parsha?
2. Which tribe was ohn ben peles from?
3. How many people died with Korach?
4. Who threw away the pans that Korach offered his Ketores in?

**Adults**

1. Why does the Torah not teach that קרח was related to Yaakov?
2. Where did the tribe of Reuben camp?
3. Why did Moshe fall on his face after he heard Korachs speech?
4. What did Moshe mean when he asked Hashem to "not turn to their gift offering"?
5. What percentage of crops are given to a Levi?

1. As Yaakov davened on his death bed that he should not be associated with Korach (Rashi).  
 2. They camped near the family of Korach to the south of the Mishkan.  
 3. Out of humiliation (Chizkuni) Moshe felt that he was powerless to daven to Hashem for forgiveness, this was the fourth time they had gone against Hashem and he felt that he could not plead again. (Rashi)  
 4. Moshe asked Hashem to ignore their Korban that Korach and his followers would offer the next day. Alternatively it suggests that he asked Hashem to ignore their share in the daily communal offering (Midrash, Rashi)  
 5. A tenth.

**Adults**

1. Doshon, Aviram and ohn ben peles
2. Reuven
3. 250
4. Eleozor

**Kids**